Republic of the Philippines
Senate
Impeachment Court

Senate of the Philippines
RMMS
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ADMINISTRATIVE MATTER No. 2026 - 001
Series of 2026

SUBJECT: GUIDELINES FOR THE CONDUCT OF THE PRE-TRIAL CONFERENCE IN CASE NO. 004-2026

Section 1. *Nature and Purpose of the Pre-Trial Conference.* – The Pre-Trial Conference is a preliminary proceeding before the Secretary of the Senate, acting as Clerk of the Impeachment Court, conducted prior to the impeachment trial proper. It serves as an administrative forum to simplify the issues, secure stipulations on undisputed facts, mark and authenticate evidence, resolve procedural matters, and adopt measures that promote the orderly, expeditious, and fair disposition of the case.

Section 2. *Pre-Trial Briefs and Matters for Consideration.* – Each party was directed to file a Pre-Trial Brief no later than 15 June 2026. Failure to file a Pre-Trial Brief shall be treated as failure to appear at the Pre-Trial Conference. The Pre-trial briefs and the Conference shall cover the following matters:

(a) A brief statement of the case and the relief sought;

(b) Facts the party is willing to admit or stipulate to;

(c) The factual and legal issues the party believes remain in dispute, with applicable laws, rules, and jurisprudence;

(d) A list of all documentary and object evidence to be marked, with a statement of the purpose of each;

(e) The names of witnesses and a summary of each witness's expected testimony. For justifiable cause, including reasons of safety and security, a party may reserve disclosure of the names and details of specific witnesses until their presentation before the Impeachment Court, provided that reserved witnesses shall be included in the total number of witnesses disclosed and in the trial dates given to the parties;

(f) A reservation covering evidence not reasonably known or available at the time of the Pre-Trial Conference, provided that the identity of the witness or a description of the documentary or object evidence, and the purpose of its presentation, shall be disclosed to the other party and to the Impeachment Court at least three (3) days before its presentation; and

(g) The party's proposed order of presenting evidence per Article of Impeachment.

Section 3. *Marking of Evidence.* – Each party shall present for marking all documentary and object evidence intended to be offered during the proceedings, together with sufficient copies thereof for the use of the Impeachment Court and the adverse party. Upon request of the adverse party, or when directed by the Presiding Officer or the Impeachment Court, the party offering the document shall produce the original or a certified true copy thereof for purposes of comparison, authentication, or verification. The marking of an exhibit shall not be construed as an admission of its authenticity, due execution, genuineness, relevance, or admissibility.

Section 4. *Attendance and Representation.* – Attendance of the parties and their counsel at the Pre-Trial Conference is mandatory. Absence may be excused only by act of God, force majeure, or duly substantiated physical inability. A party may appear through a duly authorized representative with written authority to enter into stipulations or admissions on the party's behalf.

To maintain order during the proceedings, no more than fifteen (15) counsel for each party may be present and participate in the Pre-Trial Conference. Additional counsel may be allowed to participate upon prior arrangement with the Presiding Officer for justifiable reasons.

Unexcused non-appearance may result in waiver of the right to present specific evidence or witnesses, or in the formulation of the Pre-Trial Order on the basis of the available records.

The parties are directed to submit their respective lists of counsel and participants for the Pre-Trial Conference **not later than 1:00 p.m. on 17 June 2026**.

Section 5. *Trial Management and Scheduling.* – The parties and the Impeachment Court shall consult their respective calendars to agree on specific, non-extendible trial dates. The proposed sequence for the presentation of evidence, and any modification to the order of trial, shall likewise be settled at the Pre-Trial Conference.

In coordination with the parties, the Impeachment Court shall endeavor to identify the most material witnesses and limit the number of witnesses to avoid redundancy. Consistent with continuous trial guidelines, the examination of each witness shall, as far as practicable, be completed in a single session.

Section 6. *Access and Observers.* – The following access protocols shall govern the conduct of the Pre-Trial Conference:

A. Media Coverage

To promote utmost candor and an orderly conduct of the proceedings, no media coverage, whether by television, radio, print, photography, or digital streaming, shall be permitted inside the Pre-Trial Conference venue. Cameras, recording devices, microphones, and live-streaming equipment are prohibited during the Pre-Trial

Conference and all related pre-marking sessions. The conference is a deliberative working session of the Impeachment Court, not a public hearing. Its outcome shall be reflected in the Pre-Trial Order, which shall be made publicly available.

B. Senate Staff Observers

Each Senator-Judge may designate one (1) Senate staff member to observe the Pre-Trial Conference, with one (1) alternate, whose names shall be submitted to the Clerk of Court before the commencement of the session. Observers shall maintain decorum at all times and may not participate in the proceedings in any manner.

C. General Access

Access to the Pre-Trial Conference venue shall be limited to the parties and their counsel, members of the Impeachment Court, and Senate officers and staff with official functions in the proceedings.

Section 7. *The Pre-Trial Order.* – Within ten (10) days after the termination of the Pre-Trial Conference, the Presiding Officer shall issue a Pre-Trial Order stating the actions taken, the stipulations and admissions made, the evidence marked, the witnesses identified, the order of presentation of the Articles of Impeachment, and the trial dates. The Pre-Trial Order shall bind the parties, limit the trial to matters not disposed of, and control the subsequent course of the proceedings. No deviation therefrom shall be permitted without leave of the Impeachment Court.

The parties shall be given a period to file comments or requests for correction before the Order becomes final. Failure to file written objections within the prescribed period shall constitute agreement with its contents.

Section 8. *Effectivity.* – These Guidelines shall take effect immediately upon issuance and shall govern all pre-trial proceedings in Case No. 004-2026.

SO ORDERED.

Issued this 16th day of June 2026 at Pasay City, Metro Manila, Philippines.

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SEN. SHERWIN T. GATCHALIAN
Presiding Officer